

Sees Cabinet Meetings as Time Wasted

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Kennedy Prefers To Talk to Individuals

WASHINGTON, Apr. 11 (UPI).—President Kennedy said tonight he considers general Cabinet meetings to be "a waste of time" and that he prefers to meet with his department heads individually or in small groups. He said the same is true to a lesser degree for the National Security Council.

Mr. Kennedy, who emphasized he was not downgrading the Cabinet as an instrument of government, discussed the question in an NBC television interview.

He described the duties of his various assistants as their pictures were shown. He said he tries to keep in touch with his top aids individually. This is better than having a chief of staff, he said, because it provides "much greater intimacy with the various responsibilities that we have."

"Stimulate Them to Action"

The President said he considers one of his functions to be "to try to gather together as many able people as can be gathered and then to constantly stimulate them to action and use the White House for that purpose."

Mr. Kennedy said two top assistants, Arthur M. Schlesinger Jr. and Richard Goodwin, have been given major assignments with respect to United States relations with Latin America because that area "is in a most critical period in its relation with us."

"The more, if we don't move now," he said, Mr. Castro may become a greater danger than he is today."

For Explanation

Asked Pierre Salinger, White House Press Secretary, to explain the latter remark, he said the President simply means the United States must move in Latin America. He said there was no reference to moving in Cuba.

Commenting on Ray Scherer, who conducted the TV interview, observed that Mr. Kennedy did not seem to have as many Cabinet meetings as other Presidents. He asked if Mr. Kennedy found a Cabinet unwieldy.

The President said he had held only two Cabinet meetings since his inauguration Jan. 20, 1961. He said this "is en-

President's Are Specialized

"But the reason is that all these problems Cabinet officers deal with are very specialized," he said. "I see all the Cabinet officers every week. . . . But we do not have these general Cabinet meetings which I really feel to be unnecessary and involve a waste of time."

He explained, for example, that there was not much point in discussing the Post Office budget with Agriculture Secretary Orville L. Freeman and Welfare Secretary Abraham A.

Rubioff, who have their own problems.

"I think in the future that we will find the Cabinet perhaps more important than it has ever been, but Cabinet meetings not as important," Mr. Kennedy said.

By the same token, he said he has averaged three or four meetings a week with the Secretaries of State and Defense, Central Intelligence Agency Director Allen W. Dulles, Vice-President Johnson and the special Presidential assistant for national security affairs, McGeorge Bundy.

"But formal meetings of the Security Council, which include a much wider group, are not as effective, and it is more difficult to decide matters involving high national security if there is a wider group present," Mr. Kennedy said.